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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0688
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0025
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0629
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000847

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [AJ](#) [RU](#) [LV](#)

SUBJECT: LATVIAN PLANS TO OFFER AZERBAIJAN ASSISTANCE ON
GABALA RADAR STATION

REF: A. BAKU 219

[1](#)B. BAKU 154

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Donald Lu per 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff met with Latvian Ambassador to Baku Mikhails Popkovs on July 5, 2007, at Popkovs request. Popkovs told poloff that as a NATO ally, and given the high-profile nature of issues surrounding missile defense and the Gabala station, that Latvia wished to inform the U.S. Embassy Baku that Latvia planned to offer to Azerbaijan to share with Azerbaijan, Latvia's experience with the Skrunda radar station (Skrundas lokators) in Latvia, with the intention that Azerbaijan could then apply these lessons to the Gabala radar station.

[1](#)2. (C) Popkovs said that he had had telephonic contact with the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, morning of July 5, and that he had received permission to meet with Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov on July 6, and offer to share Latvia's experience with the Skrunda radar station with Azerbaijan, with the hope that it could be applied to the Gabala radar station, currently operated by the Russians in Azerbaijan. According to Popkovs, the Skrunda radar station, which has since been destroyed, was a "Darjal"-type (Soviet) radar station, and was exactly like that at Gabala. Furthermore, Popkovs said that Skrunda was operated like Gabala, in that it was a completely closed facility to locals, and was operated by Russians. Popkovs said that Latvia had "all the documentation" on Skrunda and that "many of the people were still around" who worked on Skrunda, and that Latvia was prepared to "share their experiences" (i.e. documentation and people) with Azerbaijan "in all areas". Popkovs highlighted that environmental and ecological areas of potential cooperation could have a positive effect for the population living around this radar station may be of primary interest, but that additional sharing of information may be useful in the coming years depending on what the results of potential Russian-United States cooperation on missile defense was.

[1](#)3. (C) Popkovs admitted that potential "sharing" of information was initially broached by the Latvian side in September 2006, and that in his July 6 meeting with Azimov, Popkovs would propose that the issue be formally added to the Latvia-Azerbaijan "political dialogue" agenda. However, he noted that Latvia had essentially "heard nothing" back from Azerbaijan after the initial proposal, and he pointed out that he did not expect much of a response from Azerbaijan on

this proposal. Poloff thanked Popkovs for the heads up about the proposal and said that he would inform the U.S. Embassy in Riga and the appropriate people in the USG about this initiative. Poloff also noted that the proposal was timely for the U.S. side and that he would be sure that the relevant people participating in the U.S.-Azerbaijan security talks, scheduled to be held on 9-10 July 2007 in Washington were also aware of this proposal.

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